

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Laird Manufacturing

Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (Manex)

Laird Manufacturing Improves Productivity Through Continuous Improvement

Client Profile:

Laird Manufacturing manufactures equipment designed for the cattle feeding industry, including vertical and horizontal mixers as well as feed wagons, bale choppers, and delivery systems. The company employs 45 people at its facility in Merced, California.

Situation:

Laird had achieved an average annual growth rate of 20 percent and was committed to shaping an organization with a shared culture, common objectives, and streamlined, efficient operations. The changes would be built on a foundation of quality, leading edge technology, and continuous improvement. The company engaged the Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (Manex), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to assist with its Lean Enterprise transformation by advising in the implementation of world-class processes with rapid and meaningful improvements in quality and efficiency.

Solution:

Manex carefully assessed Laird's business and processes, identified opportunities for improvement, and then facilitated the implementation of those processes throughout the organization. A Value Stream Map and in-depth quality assessment was conducted to assess the current manufacturing operations and quality system. Through this intense process, the operations were flowcharted with steps, activities, material and information flows to clearly identify the most significant improvement opportunities throughout the environment. Front end processes, including sales, marketing, and engineering were included in the Value Stream analysis. A one-day workshop was provided for corporate senior and mid-level managers to help each of them understand their roles and responsibilities in supporting and driving the Lean transformation effort. A High Impact Event scorecard was jointly developed with the Laird Manufacturing financial team in an effort to understand and execute effective engagements. The team executed a Kaizen for the pre-fabrication area. The pre-fabrication components area impacts all the other cells downstream and its proper functioning is essential to meeting company goals with respect to performance. Improvements in this area enabled greater throughput in the overall value stream to more effectively meet customer demand.

Results:

- * Improved safety by 71 percent, reducing safety incidents from 24 to 7.
- * Reduced rework by 17 percent, from 35 hours to 29 hours.
- * Increased productivity by 19 percent, reducing labor unit average from 388 hours to 314 hours.

Testimonial:

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"Manex helped us get started on our Lean initiatives. Our team now has a better understanding of the principles of Lean and how it can be the foundation for improving our productivity through continuous improvement."

Michael Baca, Production Manager